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ABSTRACT

The 1973 British Green Paper on post-school education is considered with respect to emphasis in higher and further education, the structure of higher and further education, the comprehensive principle, and recurrent education principles. The Green Paper recommended the restructuring of the education of the post-16-year-olds into two sectors based on age alone: (1) 16-18 years, and (2) adults. The Green Paper recommended that greatly increased emphasis should be given to 16-to-18-year-olds, and especially to those who leave formal education as soon as compulsory schooling is completed and do not return for any further courses. It was recommended that increased emphasis should be given to adult education and "nonadvanced education." The implementation of Green Paper recommendations and comments on implementation by study group members are considered. The writing of the Green Paper is also considered. (SW)

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THE 1973 BRITISH GREEN PAPER ON POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION

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In 1967 the British Labour Party National Executive Committee established a study group on Higher and Further Education "to consider the structure of post-school education and formulate proposals accordingly". The Report was published in 1973 as an Opposition Green Paper.[1]

This Green Paper can be considered (i) with respect to emphasis in Higher and Further Education (H & FE), (ii) with respect to the structure of H & FE, (iii) with respect to the comprehensive principle, and (iv) with respect to recurrent education principles.

(i) Traditionally, the British Labour Party has seen Higher Education (HE) as a strategy in breaking down social class barriers, and has given priority to the provision of access to HE for children of working class parents. Up to 1973, relatively little attention has been given by the British Labour Party to Further Education (FE), possibly because it has been felt that FE reinforces existing class distinctions. Thus the Green Paper can be examined to determine what emphasis is given to FE, including the education/training[2] of technicians, tradesmen, and the young people who go into jobs without vocational preparation.

(ii) The structure of British Higher and Further Education is complex. For example, HE courses are provided by universities, by polytechnics (similar to Australian CAEs), by colleges of further education (i.e. technical colleges), and by colleges of education, with various functions being performed by the institutions, the Department of Education and Science (DES), the University Grants Committee (UGC), Local Education

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Authorities (LEAs), Regional Councils, Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA), and curriculum development and examining bodies. The British structure of H & FE suffers from a lack of adequate co-ordination, which is especially evident during financial stringencies. Does the Green Paper recommend improved co-ordination procedures?

(iii) The British Labour Party's ideology of comprehensive education is that there should be no differentiation of secondary schools on the basis of ability; i.e. education at secondary school should be comprehensive with no differentiation among secondary schools apart from the geographical areas they serve. If education should be comprehensive at primary and secondary levels, why should it not also be comprehensive at the post-school level?

(iv) A recurrent education system is considered to be one providing a wide range of options (courses, attendance patterns, teaching/learning methods) with minimum barriers (access based only on the prerequisite knowledge and skills needed, and transfer courses available to provide such learnings), such that each person can select a program to meet his/her needs.

THE 1973 BRITISH GREEN PAPER

The Green Paper recommended the restructuring of the education of the post-16 year olds into two sectors based on age alone:

(1) 16-18 years, to be administered by local education authorities, and

(2) adult.

The following arguments were advanced:

"(i) any demarcation of sectors on a basis other than that of the age of students (e.g. by academic level, full-time and part-time study and between vocational and academic education) will inevitably have invidious social implications;

(ii) it will enable us to consider 16-18 education as a unity;

(iii) it will distinguish one sector as that of compulsory (full-time or part-time) education and the other as that of voluntary education;

(iv) it will distinguish between the education of minors and the education of adults;

(v) it will distinguish between those students who are generally mobile for attendance at both full-time and part-time courses and those who generally need provision of education near home; and hence would constitute a rational division between education to be locally self-sufficient and education to be provided on an area, regional or national basis." (p.20)

A number of "general principles" were stated, including:

- "... Government action should aim to stimulate demand... by 1980, provision for post-school education should be double..."
- "Our aim is to extend the true concept of comprehensive education to the post-school sector. We envisage an open system of post-school education where a diverse range of opportunities are accessible to all..."
- "Post-school education should be a synthesis of liberal and vocational studies." (p.37)

In reading the Green Paper, it is difficult to detect any one-to-one correspondences between ages (sectors) and courses, and institutions and courses. It is not clear, for example, whether trade (craft) and technician courses will be confined to the one sector, and if so, what sector. Obviously both 16-18 year olds and adults (19+ years) are undertaking trade and technician courses. Some clarification is required. For this paper, it is assumed that trade and technician courses (including courses controlled by the Technician and Business Education Councils) will be confined to one sector, the adult sector.[3]

(1) 16-18 years

The Green Paper recommended that greatly increased emphasis should be given to this age group, and especially to those who leave formal education as soon as compulsory schooling is completed and do not return for any further courses. Very specific comments were made: "The principle to which members of the Study Group give priority is that in future, emphasis should be laid on post-school educational provision for those who are at present considered non-academic and obtain a very small share of the available resources and effort." (p.19)

This priority was to be achieved by considering all young people in the 16 to 18 age range as being primarily in education (i.e. receiving liberal education) "and subsequently day-released, block released etc. for employment" (p.27) (i.e. compulsory release from employment).

The recommended structure is for schools and colleges of further education to be administered by LEAs under the same regulations. This recommendation was intended to provide for more flexibility, including the movement between schools and colleges of teachers and students, and for the introduction of part-time education at school.

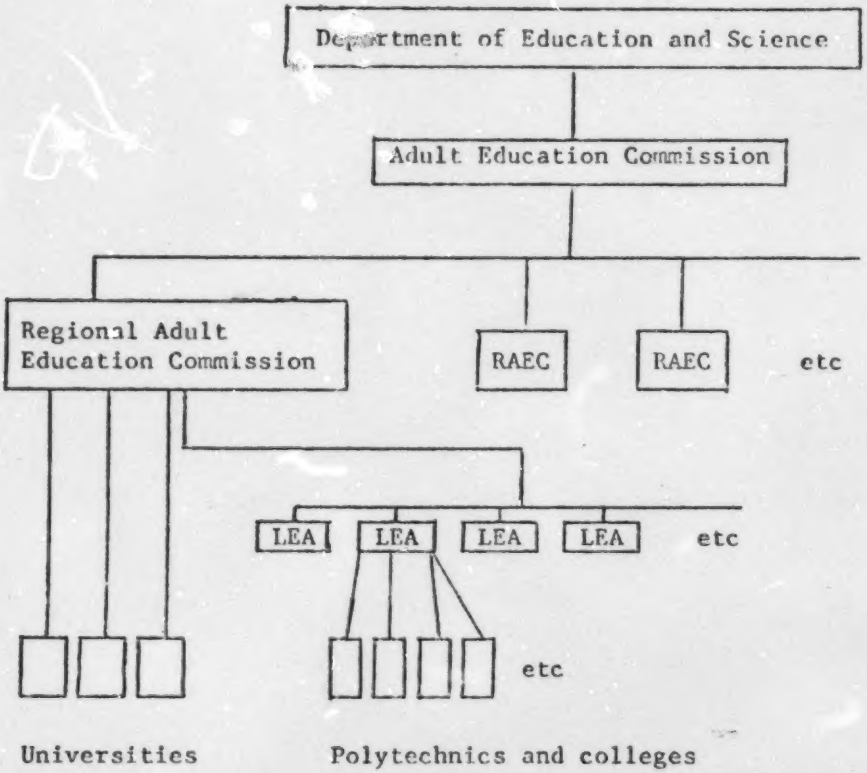
Presumably students taking A-levels for admission to HE (academic education) will tend to go to schools full-time, and those compulsorily released from employment will tend to go to colleges (of further education). This seems to be a different usage of comprehensive to the secondary education usage of all students in a district going to a single institution.

It is generally accepted that recurrent education principles state that each person should make the decision as to whether to undertake a course, and the decision as to what course to undertake. It would seem that compulsory attendance at a compulsory (liberal education) course "for those who are at present considered non-academic" is inconsistent with such principles. However, it can be argued that this 16-18 sector is a compulsory sector, and that recurrent education is normally considered to relate to post-compulsory education and therefore not to be directly relevant to this sector.

(2) 19+ years (Adult Education)

The Green Paper recommended that increased emphasis should be given to adult education. Also advocated was increased emphasis on "non-advanced education"; trade and technician courses are not directly referred to, but are presumably included in this category. (It is very interesting to speculate on the reasons for the lack of specific discussion concerning trade and technician courses.)

The recommended structure can be shown diagrammatically:



It is seen that control/co-ordination is greatly increased, especially with respect to the universities, by the introduction of the Adult Education Commission and the RAECs; possibly the latter could be considered as enlarged and stronger regional advisory councils (which exist presently for non-university post-school education). It would seem that the components of the present binary system (universities and polytechnics) are to be treated as different sets of institutions.

The reasons for recommending a range of institutions (rather than a single adult education institution), and for recommending a different method of control for universities as opposed to other institutions (a binary system at 'a lower level') were not presented. Again, this would seem to indicate a different usage of comprehensive to the secondary education usage of one school encompassing 'different ability levels'.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GREEN PAPER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Green Paper noted the rapid rise in numbers and expenditure on post-school education in the 1960s. It then stated: "Obviously if the plans contained in our report for a rapid expansion of all sectors of post-school education are implemented education expenditure as a whole will have to rise at a far greater rate than currently proposed." (p.25) Since the release of the Green Paper there has been a continuing financial crisis in Britain, and this together with other reasons has resulted in constraints on expansion of post-school education. However, a number of structural rearrangements would not have been very costly, and the financial constraint alone would not have affected their full or partial implementation.

Despite the Labour Party having been in office since early 1974, little progress has been made in implementing the Green Paper recommendations. Why?

British Labour Party policy development can be examined in terms of three sets of documents:

(i) The yearly "Labour's Programme", prepared by the National Executive Committee for the annual Labour Conference.

(ii) The resolutions passed by the Conference which are included in the Conference Report.

(iii) The brief statement of some conference resolutions placed in the Labour Party manifesto for a specific election campaign.

(1) 16-18 years

The 1973 Labour's Programme emphasised increased provision for this sector. It also supported the provision of compulsory release from employment for education, and other related recommendations of the Green Paper. This emphasis was very specifically supported at the 1973

Labour Party conference; included was the statement supporting "part-time education with the right to attend day and block release courses without loss of pay". The February, 1974 Manifesto was a brief document emphasizing policies concerning rising prices, the energy crisis, unemployment, and the common market; it did, however, contain the phrase "... a big expansion of educational facilities for 16-18 year olds...". The larger October 1974 Manifesto stated: "As in all our plans, economic restraints are found to influence timing. But the next Labour Government will .... provide increased opportunities for further education and training including compulsory paid day release, especially for young people who leave school early."

There is still (early 1979) no compulsory paid release from employment for education for all 16-18 year olds, and it would seem that there has been little change in the proportion of educational expenditure going to this age group. (In fact, there may have been a slight decrease.) However, the 1976 Labour's Programme reaffirms the principles of increased emphasis and compulsory paid release from employment; it also notes that appropriate curricula are necessary. Furthermore, the Government has announced its intention "to give priority to the vocational preparation of young people aged 16 to 19 years", and in July 1976 announced its proposal of supporting the establishment of pilot schemes in order "to establish the forms of vocational preparation which will attract these young people and win the support of their employers".[4]

It would seem that, in addition to the financial constraint, two other factors have tended to prevent the turning of the slogan "Education for all 16-18 year olds" into reality. One is the educational

problem of determining what are appropriate curricula. The other is the administrative issue concerning who will co-ordinate this sector, which is related to the curriculum issue. Apparently the Department of Education and Science is not interested in vocational education/ training;[5] e.g. the pilot schemes programme announced in July, 1976 is the joint responsibility of "LEA, the Department of Employment, and the Training Services Agency".

In order to provide flexibility, including the provision of part-time education at school, the Green Paper recommended "the education of all 16-18 year olds, whether in schools or colleges, full or part-time, should be under the same regulations". (p.38) This was supported in 1973 Labour's Programme. However, this recommendation has not yet been implemented.

(2) 19+ years (Adult Education)

Although perhaps not as strongly as the Green Paper, the 1973 Labour's Programme clearly supported the expansion of the Adult Education Sector on a recurrent education basis. It stated that the "main burden of expansion" would take place in non-university institutions. There were also references to trade and technician education: "We shall also expand provision for day release and block release for those at work. We emphasize the importance, both to individuals and to society, of those full-time and part-time courses which are below-degree level and are offered in technical colleges and other institutions of further education... We are also considering a system of national examinations for trade and technical qualifications."[6] (p.77) This sector is not mentioned in the February 1974 Manifesto, and only briefly mentioned in the October 1974 Manifesto with statements concerning adult literacy

classes and the Open University.

The Adult Education Commission recommended in the Green Paper is not mentioned in the 1973 Labour's Programme nor in the 1974 Manifestos, and would appear not to be under discussion at present. The Regional Adult Education Commissions are also not recommended in the above publications; however, the possibility of regional organisation is raised in the 1973 Labour's Programme[7], and is again referred to in the 1976 Labour's Programme. To date, there has been no restructuring of Adult Education as recommended in the Green Paper.

Summary

Since the Green Paper has been published:

(i) There has been increased emphasis on the 16-18/19 age group, but primarily at a discussion level.

(ii) There has been increased emphasis on the provision of recurrent education for adults, but primarily at a discussion level.

(iii) There have been no structural rearrangements and apparently little discussion concerning structural rearrangements; there has been no movement towards post-school comprehensive education (involving either one or two sectors) in the sense of comprehensive education used at the secondary education level, or in

Comments on implementation by some members of the Study Group.

A list of pressures tending to prevent implementation were given by various educators, including Study Group members. Such pressures were said to include:

(1) For the 16-18/19 years sector.

It is considered that these groups would be against schools and colleges being administered under the same regulations:

- Churches;
- Schools;
- Teachers;
- Teachers' unions.

This is partially due to the method of payment to teachers which relates to the numbers of advanced students. There would be even more opposition if it were decided to base this sector in FE colleges only (rather than in schools, or in both schools and colleges).

Due to this pressure, it is felt that DES (Department of Education and Science) is tending towards inertia in attempting to develop a set of regulations.

Lack of finance was stated to be the major factor in not increasing the resources allocated to the "non-academic" in the 16-18 years sector, and in not providing compulsory paid release from employment for education.

(2) For the adult sector (19^{+} years).

It was suggested that one reason for the non-implementation of structural arrangements is the lack of knowledge concerning FE in the community, in DES, at (Labour) Minister of Education level, and at (Labour) Cabinet level. It is argued that school education and university education

are well known, making pressures from these sectors hard to withstand.

It was also suggested that the universities were against the formation of an Adult Education Commission and Regional Adult Education Commissions, as these bodies would tend to bring about increased co-ordination and perhaps increased control of universities. Concerning the Regional Adult Education Commissions, it would appear that there is a debate within the Labour Party at present concerning whether there should be Regional or Local control, or both, of the adult sector.

THE WRITING OF THE GREEN PAPER — A CASE OF COMPROMISE

Two major factors emerged from a series of discussions with British educators, some of whom were members of the Study Group which wrote the Green Paper. They were:

(1) It would seem that there were initially two major ideological positions: one which wished to maintain the 'primacy' of the universities in post-school education, and another which was interested in developing further education (at all levels) at the expense of universities. It would seem that many of the 'university group' tended to leave the Study Group as it became apparent that the 'alternative position' was predominating; however, for the sake of unity and to assist in presenting a report which could be expected to become Labour Party policy, the 'alternative position' was not pushed to the extreme.[8]

Thus, although the Green Paper has recommended greatly increased control over the universities, and would therefore be seen as a victory for the 'alternative position', it still remains a compromise with a number of ragged edges. Thus, there was apparently a lack of agreement on the meaning of the term "true concept of comprehensive education"; to everyone it meant that admission to HE should not be restricted by social class, but there was relatively little agreement concerning other aspects. There was disagreement concerning whether all forms of adult education (i.e. 19+ years) should take place in the one institution; apparently 'historical reasons' tended to be stronger than any other possible compromise position in allowing for the continuation of universities as separate entities.

(2) The apparent lack of knowledge of many members of the Study Group concerning post-school education, apart from higher education.

It would seem that the members knew little about trade and technician education, that these components of further education were

barely discussed, and that this is the reason why it is not clear as to which sector(s) (between the 16-18 sector and the adult sector) trade education and technician education were being allocated. Furthermore, it would seem that these sectors are still little understood, although there is probably more awareness now of technician education with the relatively recent institution of the Technician Education Council and the Business Education Council.

FOOTNOTES

1 Labour Party Study Group, Higher and further education. Smith Square, London: The Labour Party, 1973.

2 In Britain, the tendency is to consider 'education' as the function of an educational institution, and 'training' as the function of an industrial firm. Many British educational theorists subdivide 'education' into 'liberal education' (not related to occupational needs) and 'vocational education', and promote liberal education to the detriment of vocational education and training.

3 The statement "...we would recommend that an Adult Education Commission should be established to take overall responsibility for education within all institutions catering wholly or in part for the over-eighteens" (p.31) suggests that all institutions offering trade courses and technician courses should be classified in the Adult Education sector.

4 These quotes are from the document Unified vocational preparation: a pilot approach and DES Circular 6/76 which accompanied it. The following extract comes from the section on the aims of vocational preparation:-

"As part of the broad aim of giving young people a fair start in working life, initial vocational preparation should assist young people:

(i) to assess their potential and think realistically about jobs and careers;

(ii) to develop the basic skills which will be needed in adult life generally;

(iii) to understand their society and how it works;

(iv) to strengthen the foundation of skill and knowledge on which further training and education can be built.

The personal development of young people...should involve increased self-confidence and a surer sense of personal identity; responsibility and adaptability in working relationships; and a disposition to plan ahead and seek out opportunities for employment, training and further education."

5 "The department's lack of interest in vocational training also led to the Training Services Agency being established in another Ministry." David Hencke in The Guardian, 27 September, 1976, p.1. (It has been argued that one of the reasons for the "cinderella status" in Britain of trade education, technician education, and other post-school non-advanced education/training is due to the lack of interest in this field by DES, and that there should be a separate Department of Post-school Education and Training to be responsible for this field.)

6 The last sentence has been partially implemented by the creation of the Technician Education Council and the Business Education Council. These bodies have produced policy statements, and are located at 76 Portland Place, London WIN 4AA.

7 "We shall investigate the possibility of regional organisation, a need which is particularly acute in some places because of the present Government's decision to make education the responsibility of 'lower tier' authorities in metropolitan areas. We shall discuss with the local authorities, the University Grants Committee and the voluntary bodies, the establishment of regional councils to co-ordinate the contribution of all institutions to the comprehensive provision of opportunity. Such councils will be concerned with general policy, development planning and resource allocation." (p.77)

8 It is understood that there was much argument concerning whether the Labour Party should publish the Green Paper, reinforcing the suggestion that the adoption of an extreme 'alternative position' would not have been acceptable to the Labour Party, and so compromise was essential.